ment had distintegrated. Even before the rioting, Prince Lvov had decided to resign in view of his clash with the Minister of Agriculture, Chernov, who was encouraging rural communities to take over lands abandoned by big landowners. Kerensky had disappeared during the riots. He returned after order was restored, explaining that he had spent those hectic days at the front in search of reliable troops, but could find none. The four Cadet ministers had resigned before the outbreak of the riots; Tseretelli, Skobelev, and Chernov were busy in the Tauride Palace; other members of the Cabinet were simply forgotten in the turmoil.[5]

Our most urgent task was obviously to establish a new government that could inspire confidence in the masses of the people, and it seemed such a government could be established only on the basis of agreement among the leading political groups.

For practical purposes, three groups counted: the Communists, who were discredited by the failure of their attempted coup but who preserved their grip over a part of the Petrograd garrison, the Baltic fleet, and a considerable part of workers; the majority of the Soviets, which had emerged victorious from the clash, controlled the armed forces at the front and in the rear, and were supported by the peasants; and the Cadets, the only organized political party of the right, which had followers among intellectuals, government officials, officers, and employers and could speak in the name of property-minded, non-Socialist elements.[6]

The decision was in the hands of the central group, the working majority of the All-Russian Executive Committee of Workers and Soldiers. Its choice was between a government of the Soviets, which would amount to a coalition with the Bolsheviks; a government of the moderates, without the extreme left and right; and a government based on a coalition with the rightist groups. We knew that a government of the Soviets would be only a transition to Communist rule.

[5] Only the Minister of Justice had attempted to counter Lenin's propaganda by declaring that Lenin was a German agent. The accusation was based on flimsy evidence, however, and Chkheidze declined to publish it in *Izvestia*. Miliukov's *History* represents this announcement as the main cause of the Petrograd garrison's change in mood. It is, of course, impossible to ascertain how many soldiers believed this accusation. Personally, I was in constant touch with the garrison during this time. Not a single soldier so much as mentioned that charge to me when trying to explain the change in his regiment's or company's attitude. All spoke about the movement of troops from the front to the capital: That was the factor that had turned the tide. When the soldiers of Petrograd realized that the Bolsheviks had led them to a conflict with the front army, they turned to us.

[6] The Cadets claimed to represent the whole nation but were unable to substantiate this claim by the popular vote. They showed themselves very weak in democratic elections to rural and municipal councils in 1917, and the subsequent elections to the Constituent Assembly gave them less than 2.5 per cent of the seats.